



HURRICANE HARVEY

USE OF TEMPORARY WATER TANKS AS A POTABLE WATER SUPPLY

IN TEXAS COUNTIES UNDER THE GOVERNOR'S DISASTER DECLARATION

GUIDANCE DATE: September 14, 2017

DSHS licensed entities, including food retailers and wholesalers, may use temporary storage tanks to hold and distribute potable water. These procedures are for emergency situations only. Once the public water system is restored in the disaster area, normal rule requirements for an approved water source will apply.

Guidance:

Some potable water requirements cannot be waived without endangering public health. These are:

- Water must be obtained from an approved source.
 - Drinking water utilized for distribution by a tanker truck or trailer must be obtained from a Texas Commission on Environmental Quality approved public water system in accordance with the requirements of 25 TAC § 229.83 (a). When a boil-water advisory is issued, a public water system, such as municipal water, is not considered an approved source.
- Water received from a tanker truck or trailer must be tested to ensure compliance with the required minimum chlorine residual.
 - A minimum free chlorine residual of 0.5 mg/L or, if chloramines are used as the primary disinfectant, a chloramine residual of 1.0 mg/L (measured as total chlorine) shall be maintained in the water being hauled in accordance with 25 TAC § 229.83 (b)
- The storage tank must be constructed from food grade materials. Whenever possible, new tanks should be used. Tanks previously used for holding chemicals and petroleum derivatives cannot be used in accordance with CDC Emergency Water Supply Planning Guide for Hospitals and Health Care Facilities Version 2 (www.cdc.gov).

Best practices for storing and transferring supplies of potable water include:

- Water should be transferred to and from the temporary storage tank in a manner that prevents contamination per Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Emergency Temporary Water Haulers (www.tceq.texas.gov).
 - Connections and hoses must be utilized to transfer drinking water only. In addition, they must be cleaned and sanitized before and between use and properly stored.
- The water stored in the temporary storage tank should be maintained at a free chlorine residual of between 0.5 mg/L and 2.0 mg/L/ levels per CDC Emergency Water Supply Planning Guide for Hospitals and Health Care Facilities Version 2 (www.cdc.gov). Warm temperatures can lead to dissipation of free chlorine, so free chlorine residual levels may need to be monitored often.
- There should be back flow prevention in place within the facility to ensure no back flow of water from the facility into the tank per 25 TAC § 229.220(2)(E). This could cause the water in the tank to become contaminated.
- The company must be able to provide documentation that the water is from an approved source and appropriate chlorine residuals are being maintained. The documentation should be available for the duration of the time the temporary storage tank is being utilized as the potable water source per 25 TAC § 229.83 (c). This is reduction of the normal 2-year record retention requirements.

NOTE: If an inspection by a properly qualified inspector notes egregious sanitation or equipment conditions, the temporary potable water supply may be shut down until sanitation and equipment conditions are restored to acceptable levels.

For any questions or concerns contact:

Foods Group: 512-834-6670

Public Sanitation and Retail Food Safety Group: 512-834-6753

Additional Resources:

<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/response/hurricanes/emergency-temporary-water-haulers.pdf>

<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/response/hurricanes/harvey-public-water-systems-requirements.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/emergency/emergency-water-supply-planning-guide.pdf>